

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 HA-05 MCT-01 ACDA-12 /108 W

-----004265 061546Z /14

R 051525Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7058

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PERCY QOBOZA

1. SUMMARY: FORMER EDITOR OF THE WORLD, PERCY QOBOZA, VISITED CAPE TOWN APRIL 3-4 FOR MEETINGS WITH PIK BOTHA AND CONNIE MULDER. IN A WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, QOBOZA TALKED OF HIS MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTERS, HIS DETENTION, THE SITUATION IN SOWETO AND THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS, HIS EDITORSHIP OF POST, AND HIS PERSONAL PLANS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 3, EMBOFF HAD A WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WITH PERCY QOBOZA, WHO WAS IN CAPE TOWN TO MEET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PIK BOTHA AND MINISTER OF PLURAL AFFAIRS CONNIE MULDER. QOBOZA HAD ALREADY SEEN BOTHA IN CONNECTION WITH A PROPOSED VISIT TO NAMIBIA. JUSTICE MINISTER JIMMY KRUGER HAD WARNED QOBOZA AGAINST GOING TO NAMIBIA SINCE KRUGER CONSIDERS HIM "SWAPO-ORIENTED" AND A "TROUBLE-MAKER" WHO BOTHA WOULD NOT WANT ON THE SCENE AT THIS DELICATE STAGE.
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BOTHA HIMSELF, HOWEVER, TOLD QOBOZA ON APRIL 3 HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO HAVE QOBOZA VISIT THE TERRITORY AND GET A BALANCED VIEW. QOBOZA IS NOW NO LONGER CERTAIN THAT HE WANTS TO VISIT THE TERRITORY.

3. QOBOZA WAS TO SEE MULDER THE NEXT DAY. ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT MET MULDER BEFORE, QOBOZA SAID HE DOES NOT HOLD OUT MUCH

HOPE FOR A MAN WHO ENTERS OFFICE SAYING THAT ALL BLACKS WILL EVENTUALLY LOSE THEIR SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENSHIP. HIS PRIMARY PURPOSE IN MEETING MULDER, QOBOZA SAID, WAS TO REQUEST THE RELEASE OF THE REMAINING OCTOBER 19 DETAINEES, AND IN PARTICULAR THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN.

4. QOBOZA WAS RELAXED AND CHEERFUL, ALTHOUGH HE SAID THERE IS BITTERNESS IN HIS HEART AS THE RESULT OF HIS RECENT DETENTION. HE RECOUNTED A CONVERSATION IN WHICH HE TOLD JIMMY KRUGER HE NEVER DREAMED THAT HE WOULD ENTER PRISON AS A "BANTU" AND EMERGE AS A "PLURAL." KRUGER, HE SAID, WAS NOT AMUSED, AND TOLD HIM HE SHOULD KNOW HE COULD GET IN TROUBLE BY ALWAYS TAKING THE WRONG ATTITUDE TOWARDS EVERYTHING.

5. THE REMAINING DETAINEES, QOBOZA SAID, ARE IN GOOD SPIRITS. HE BELIEVES THE SAG WILL CONTINUE TO RELEASE THEM A FEW AT A TIME TO AVOID THE SENSATION WHICH WOULD BE CAUSED BY A MASS RELEASE. WHILE HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE IMPRISONMENT WAS A POLITICIZING EXPERIENCE, HE BEMOANED THE CONTINUING POLITICAL DIVISION AMONG THE DETAINEES. THEIR SOLIDARITY WAS SHALLOW, HE SAID, AND THEY WERE BASICALLY HELD TOGETHER BY THE COMMON ENEMY. HE SAID HIS CELL WAS CHARACTERIZED BY POLITICAL ARGUING BETWEEN DR. MOTLANA (CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN) ON THE ONE HAND AND KEN RACHIDI AND SMANGALISO MKHATSHWA OF THE BLACK PEOPLES CONVENTION ON THE OTHER. GOING A STEP FURTHER ON THE SUBJECT OF BLACK UNITY, HE COMMENTED THAT GATSHA BUTHELEZI HAS

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AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY, BUT WILL NEVER BE ACCEPTED ON HIS PRESENT PLATFORM.

6. WITH REGARD TO THE SOWETO COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS, QOBOZA SAID THEY HAVE NO CREDIBILITY OR SUPPORT AMONG THE POPULATION. ALTHOUGH CANDIDATES HAVE COME FORWARD, THE COUNCIL WILL NOT LAST AND WILL SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS THE NOW DEFUNCT URBAN BANTU COUNCIL. PARTICIPATION BY INKATHA MEMBERS DOES NOT HELP THE CREDIBILITY OF THE ELECTIONS AND UNNECESSARILY TAINTS THAT ORGANIZATION.

7. SOWETO, HE SAID, IS STILL A TROUBLE SPOT, WITH CONSIDERABLE UNREST. ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS, QOBOZA NOTED, THERE HAVE BEEN TWENTY-FIVE BOMBINGS (PRESUMABLY PETROL BOMBS) IN SOWETO IN THE LAST MONTH. IN EACH CASE THE TARGETS WERE HOMES OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WHO HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN LAST YEAR'S MASS RESIGNATIONS. HE SAID NOW THAT MOST STUDENTS WERE BACK AT SCHOOL, WHICH SOME STUDENTS CONSIDER TO BE "MILITARY BASES," THERE COULD BE MORE TROUBLE. THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL COULD BE THE NEXT TARGET.

8. WHILE QOBOZA SAID HE WOULD OFFICIALLY TAKE OVER THE EDITOR-

SHIP OF POST ON APRIL 7, HE AVOIDED COMMENTING ON HIS SPECIFIC PLANS FOR THE PAPER. HE DID, HOWEVER, CRITICIZE POST AS "WHERE WE WERE TEN YEARS AGO," AND SAID THAT IT WOULD BEGIN TO CARRY REGULAR EDITORIAL OPINION. HE ALSO COMMENTED ON THE TREMENDOUS SELF-CENSORSHIP OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS AS A WHOLE SINCE OCTOBER 19. ALTHOUGH THE ARGUS GROUP MANAGEMENT HAS NOT GIVEN HIM ANY SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS, HE WAS ASKED TO "TRY NOT TO GET BANNED AGAIN."

9. QOBOZA SUGGESTED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO GET AWAY FROM SOUTH AFRICA FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS. IN A REFERENCE TO DONALD WOODS, HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WAS NOT UP TO SWIMMING "CROCODILE INFESTED RIVERS," AND IMPLIED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE LEGALLY AND HOPE TO RETURN. HE MENTIONED ALSO THAT HE HAD BEEN OFFERED AN CONFIDENTIAL

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HONORARY DOCTORATE BY TUFTS UNIVERSITY, TO BE CONFERRED THIS MAY (JOHANNESBURG 855), AND WAS CONSIDERING A TRIP TO THE U.S. TO ACCEPT THE HONOR.
BOWDLER

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